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Letter dated 29 August 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the thirty-fifth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The present report covers the period from 23 July 2016 to 22 August 2016.

On the matter of the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, the situation remains unchanged. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has informed OPCW that the prevailing security situation continues to prevent safe access to destroy the remaining hangar and to confirm the condition of the two stationary above-ground facilities.

With respect to the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequent submissions, I note that the Director-General has addressed a letter to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, attaching a list of questions and calling again for the Syrian Arab Republic to provide scientifically and technically plausible explanations (see enclosure). I reiterate my call for continuing cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and OPCW on resolving these issues.

It is with grave concern that I recall recent allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Aleppo Governorate of the Syrian Arab Republic, and take note that the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in the Syrian Arab Republic has continued to study all available information. I note further that the FFM is studying a request by the Syrian Arab Republic to dispatch a team to investigate an alleged incident.

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism submitted its third report to the Security Council on 24 August 2016. The report provides an update on the activities of the Mechanism through 19 August 2016. It also outlines the assessment and conclusions drawn by the Leadership Panel to date, based on the results of the investigation into the nine selected cases of the use of chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. I reaffirm my condemnation of the use of such weapons by any party to the conflict. I look forward to the deliberations by the Council on this report and urge the Council to take decisive action in this regard. Accountability must be ensured for those who have used chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Please recycle

Since my last letter, the Leadership Panel and the investigators spent one week in Damascus, from 1 to 5 August 2016, for meetings with senior Syrian officials, interviews and technical briefings. The Mechanism continued to receive information relevant to its investigation from a number of Member States, as well as technical assessments from forensic institutes. In addition, the Mechanism continued its engagement with non-governmental organizations and individuals with information about the cases under investigation.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

Annex

Letter dated 24 August 2016 from the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled 'Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme' prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the OPCW Executive Council Decision EC-M-33/DEC.1, and the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council. My report covers the period from 23 July 2016 to 22 August 2016 and also covers the reporting requirements of the Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. This, the thirty-fifth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions, and includes information relevant to the period from 23 July to 22 August 2016.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

5. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 24 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. However, the poor security situation continues both to prevent safe access to destroy the remaining aircraft hangar, which stands ready to accept the explosive charges, and to confirm the condition of the two stationary above-ground facilities.

(b) On 15 August 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its thirty-third monthly report (EC-83/P/NAT.2, dated 15 August 2016) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

(c) The Syrian authorities have continued to extend the necessary cooperation in accordance with the implementation of subparagraph 1(e) of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and paragraph 7 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

6. As reported previously, all the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-81/DEC.4

7. As reported previously, the Director-General had provided the Council, at its Eighty-Second Session in July 2016, with a comprehensive picture of the Secretariat's activities so far, including the efforts to implement decision EC-81/DEC.4 to assist the Syrian Arab Republic in arriving at a declaration that is accurate and complete. The Director-General also reported on the technical details of all outstanding issues still requiring clarification, and reiterated the conclusion that the Syrian declaration cannot yet be fully verified as accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1.

8. Also, as reported previously, the Council at its Eighty-Second Session did not reach a consensus to adopt a draft decision before it entitled "Report by the Director-General on the Outcome of Consultations with the Syrian Arab Republic Regarding its Chemical Weapons Declaration" (EC-82/DEC/CRP.5, dated 7 July 2016).

9. In an effort to make progress in clarifying the outstanding issues with regard to the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration, the Director-General addressed a letter dated 27 July 2016 to H.E. Dr Faisal Mekdad, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic. In the letter, the Director-General reiterated his call for the Syrian Arab Republic to provide scientifically and technically plausible explanations to an attached list of questions related to various facets of its chemical weapons programme.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

10. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

11. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

12. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 7.8 million had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, the United States of America, and the European Union. Pledges from other donors have been made and are currently being processed.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

13. The FFM continued to study all available information relating to a number of recent allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Aleppo Governorate of the Syrian Arab Republic. Additionally, the Secretariat received a note verbale from the Syrian Arab Republic on 16 August 2016 requesting the Director-General to dispatch an FFM team to undertake investigation of an alleged incident. The request is currently being examined. The FFM's work will continue to be guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015).

14. The OPCW also continued to extend its full cooperation and support to the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Conclusion

15. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to be on the implementation of Council decision EC-81/DEC.4, as well as on the destruction and verification of the remaining aircraft hangar, confirmation of the status of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.